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## Bluff project funding in bill

### Concordia would use money for study

By **MIKE JOHNSON**

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*Last Updated: Nov. 13, 2003*

**Mequon** - A federal energy and water appropriations bill before Congress includes \$40,000 for Concordia University's \$8 million bluff restoration project.

If approved by Congress and signed by President Bush, the money would be used to conduct a feasibility study of the project, Concordia President the Rev. Patrick T. Ferry said Thursday.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers requires such a study before work can begin, Ferry said.

Concordia is seeking assistance from the corps on the bluff restoration project.

If the corps agrees to help, some of the work would be funded by the agency. Corps officials visited the campus during the summer and are evaluating the project.

U.S. Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner Jr. (R-Menomonee Falls) announced Thursday that the \$40,000 had been included in a conference report on the Energy and Water Appropriations bill. Sensenbrenner also has requested that the corps investigate bluff erosion at the university.

The school's 155-acre campus includes a half mile of Lake Michigan shoreline. The steep bluffs have been eroding over the past 10 years, and more than 8 acres has been lost to erosion, officials estimate. Because of the erosion, it is nearly impossible to safely walk down the 180-foot-high bluff to the lake.

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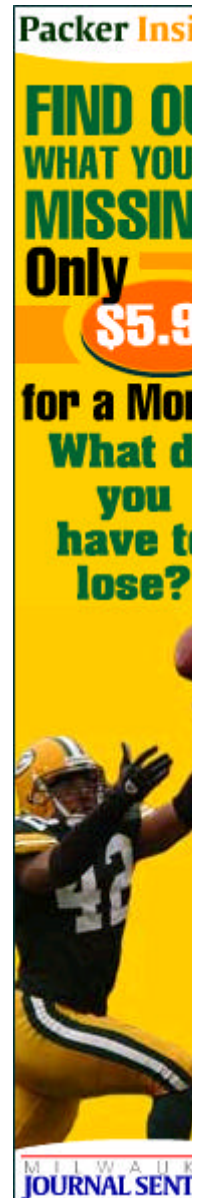
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Table of Contents

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Concordia has submitted a bluff stabilization plan to the state Department of Natural Resources, which has not yet approved it. The plan also must be approved by the City of Mequon.

The project would include:

- Regrading the bluffs and removing dirt to make them less steep.
- Cutting into the bluffs to create a beach area for recreation. Public access to the beach would be by foot.
- Creating wetlands on the shore area to provide environmental studies opportunities.
- Constructing an environmental education center.

The university hopes to acquire property south of the campus and put soil removed from the bluffs there, officials have said. That land would be converted to athletic fields under a separate \$2 million project.

Ferry said the university is still in the process of determining how to pay for the project once it gets final approval. Concordia plans a fund-raising effort and will borrow money for the project, he said.

Once the feasibility study is under way, Congress will be asked to consider providing additional funding for the bluff restoration project, said Rick Meyers, of Meyers and Associates, a Washington, D.C., legislative consulting firm and lobbyist.

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